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Approved For Release 2002/05/17 : CIA-RDP77M00144R000300010035-3

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TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE 3954
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C O N F I D E N T I A L
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TAGS: MARR, PFOR, KU, US

SUBJECT: HEARING ON KUWAIT ARMS SALES

1. NEA ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER APPEARED AS PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATION WITNESS BEFORE CONGRESSMAN FASCELL'S HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE OCTOBER 24 ON TWO RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED BY CONGRESSMEN HAMILTON AND BINGHAM OPPOSING THE PROPOSED SALE OF SIDEWINDERS TO KUWAIT. BESIDES FASCELL, HAMILTON AND BINGHAM WERE ONLY CONGRESSMEN PRESENT.
2. HAMILTON LED OFF AS FIRST WITNESS VOICING HIS CONCERNS OVER ESCALATION OF ARMS SALES TO PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES GENERALLY AND QUESTIONING SPECIFIC ARMS PROGRAM FOR KUWAIT, GIVEN COUNTRY'S VULNERABILITY AND INABILITY, EVEN UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, TO DEFEND ITSELF EXCEPT FOR A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

3. FOLLOWING SOBER'S STATEMENT, TEXT OF WHICH FORWARDED TO YOU, HE WAS QUESTIONED AT SOME LENGTH WITH HAMILTON RAISING NEED FOR EFFORTS TO HAVE REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT IN GULF.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT THE HEARING PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A FRANK EXCHANGE AND WAS USEFUL IN PRESENTING THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE TWO RESOLUTIONS WILL NOT BE PURSUED AND THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY LEGAL BAR TO PRESENTATION OF LETTER OF OFFER TO GOK AFTER 20-DAY PERIOD UNDER NELSON/BINGHAM AMENDMENT EXPIRES ON OCTOBER 30.

5. THE TWO PENDING HAWK LETTERS OF OFFER (FOR SUPPORT AND TRAINING) WERE DISCUSSED DURING HEARINGS. IT IS OUR INTENTION TO PRESENT THESE TO CONGRESS UNDER NELSON/BINGHAM AMENDMENT IN COMING WEEK.

KISSINGER

State Dept. review completed

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